THE

UNITY

An Organ of Reasonable Religion.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."—*Tennyson.*

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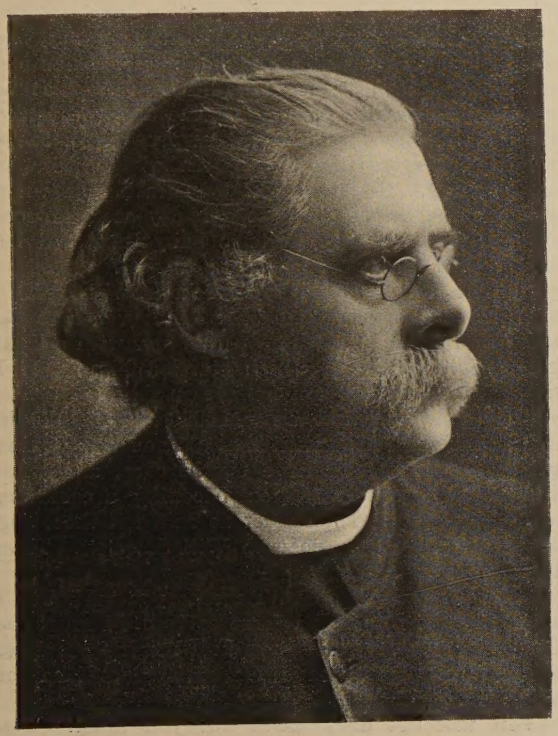


Rev. GEORGE CRITCHLEY, B.A.

Entered the Western College (Congregational) at Plymouth in 1865, and, after completing his training there, came in 1870 to Falcon Square Chapel, Aldersgate Street—a church associated with the names of Sir F. Abney, Dr. Watts, John Howe, and other worthies of Nonconformist history. In 1875 he removed to the newly-erected chapel at Lee, near Blackheath, and was minister of this congregation for 25 years. By 1900 a constantly growing sense of dissatisfaction with the old theology, and differences with the members of the Church over the South African War, led to his resignation. It was late in life to make any radical change, but Mr. Critchley felt that if he preached again at all he must have unfettered liberty of utterance on all subjects. Congregational churches could have been found, no doubt, in which very considerable license would have been allowed, but, even in the very freest, there would be an implied acceptance of dogmas impossible of belief. The result was entrance into the Unitarian denomination, followed by pastorates at Stepney, Kentish Town, and Peckham. Mr. Critchley prefers to spend his strength in the pioneer work of liberal religion—laying the foundations of new causes. During the past year he has done invaluable work in this way at Newport, Mon., and Wimbledon, where the new Unitarian churches are full of promise.

As a preacher, Mr. Critchley combines rare power of clear and vigorous exposition with a degree of eloquence which makes his appeal for liberal religion exceptionally attractive.

"There is no unbelief;
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod,
And waits to see it push away the clod—
He trusts in God."

I hope, as truly as any Christian ever did or could, to be saved by the Cross of Christ. But what do I mean by such language? Do I expect that the wood to which Christ was nailed is to save me? Do I expect the material blood which trickled from his wounds to save me? . . . No! by the Cross and Blood of Christ . . . I mean the spirit, the character, the love of Jesus, which his death made manifest.—Dr. W. E. Channing.

I hold to one true Church of all true souls,
Whose churchly seal is neither bread nor wine,
Nor laying on of hands, nor holy oil,
But only the anointing of God's grace.

——— —Theodore Tilton.

I think the part of true piety is not to make the Bible into what we think we should like it to be, but to take it as God has given it to us.

——— —C. Beard, LL.D.

Thou wilt not cast thy servant out
Because he chanced to see
With his own eyes, and dared to doubt
What praters preach of Thee.

—J. S. Blackie.

The World Grows Better.

With noiseless steps good goes its way;
The earth shakes under evil's tread.
We hear the uproar, and, 'tis said,
The world grows wicked every day.

It is not true. With quiet feet,
In silence Virtue sows her seeds;
While Sin goes shouting out his deeds,
And echoes listen and repeat.

But surely as the old world moves,
And circles round the shining sun,
So surely does God's purpose run,
And all the human race improves.

Despite bold evil's noise and stir,
Truth's golden harvests ripen fast;
The Present far outshines the Past;
Men's thoughts are higher than they were.

Who runs may read this truth, I say:
Sin travels in a rumbling car,
While Virtue soars on like a star—
The world grows better every day.

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

For All or None.

By the Author of "Randal's Principle."

CHAPTER III.

Robert Colton was not open to the new "light," as was evident in his household a few days later.

He came home from his work in the evening, and from the peculiarity of his manner it was evident that something was amiss with him.

Meanwhile, his daughter Ruth came in and sat down to the table to get her tea.

Robert, sitting at the same table, looked at her, and Ruth said:

"Father, what's the matter?"

"Matter! More than I like to tell thee. I will not have thee walking out with that Will Smeeton any more."

Ruth stared at him in astonishment, and turned as white as a ghost, and then asked:

"Why not, father?"

"Why?" said Robert; "I'll tell thee why. If thou go with him, he will take thee to hell."

"Take me to hell! How should he? He is not a bad young man. He leads a good Christian life——"

"Does he, indeed?" interposed her father. "I rather think he doesn't. He's no Christian. And my daughter must not jeopardise her salvation by keeping his company."

"Why, whatever has he done? He never touches strong drink, for he is a teetotaler. He does not swear, or use foul words. He is strong against gambling, and would not bet under any consideration. He does not even smoke as most young men do. He keeps out of debt. He supports his old grandmother. No one has ever yet been able to say that he lives anything but a clean and an upright life. What have you against him?"

"He is an UNBELIEVER!" exclaimed Robert, her father; "and no Christian young woman will consent to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever. Think of the bitterness and the disappointment to us it will be if you let yourself be joined to him, that we have brought you up only to be the wife of an unbeliever—a lost man. You must not let it go on any further. It is better that you have nothing more to do with him."

"Oh, father! you do not know him—how good he is, how much he loves Christ, how earnest he is about the coming of the kingdom of God on earth, how deeply he believes in God's love—if you knew all this as I do, you could not say he is an unbeliever."

At this Ruth burst into tears. And at the sight of her weeping Robert, in desperation, exclaimed:

"I tell thee, girl, that he is an unbeliever. He holds with all that Ralph Rendel said to the minister. I heard him with my own ears say that he does not believe either in hell or the devil. I heard him say that he does not believe that when Jesus died on the cross that it was Almighty God who was crucified. He didn't know I heard him when he said these things; and he actually said he does not believe that Dame Darton's baby that died before it could be baptised is gone to hell."

"Neither do I believe it!" said Ruth, with sudden warmth and passion, raising her head with a movement as quick as the shot of a gun, and with a light in her moistened eyes which startled him. "If I believed that I could not believe in God."

"Oh, then, thou art an unbeliever too. Ruth, Ruth, what must I do with thee? Thou art turning against the Gospel we have taught thee, and what can be done to save thee from becoming a castaway from God's grace. Thou must do as I tell thee, and have nothing more to do with Will Smeeton. Thou must not see him again."

"Father, you may do with me as you will, but I cannot obey you and be untrue to Will. I must see him again. I would not have him think I am false to him, and that I have turned against him for being true and honest in what he says."

"You will not obey me! But you must. You shall choose between us and Will Smeeton. If you will not give him up, you must give us up."

These words seemed to come on Ruth like a fearful blow. In the heat of his words Robert Colton broke out into "thee" and "thou," and seemed unusually furious. Ruth was too astonished to utter another word. And as her father hurried out of the room in his wrath, almost frightened at what he had himself said, in came Ruth's mother at another door. She had heard all, and had refrained from interfering, feeling that she could do no good. Now she came to Ruth, and, putting her hand on the girl's shoulder, quietly and soothingly said:

"Don't thee trouble, lass. It will all come right. Thi mother will stand by thee."

At these words Ruth looked into her mother's face, threw her arms round her neck, and gave way to the relief of tears and sobs.

In the stillness of that night she lay, eyes wide awake—thinking, and thinking hard. She wondered how it was that religion in her father seemed to contradict the purest love of her own heart; how it was that it seemed to be such a terrible thing that Will Smeeton refused to believe hard things of God, that He could punish a helpless babe in torment for not having been baptised; and why it was that she and Will should be made to suffer simply for being honest and true. And the answer came: Christ was crucified, and they who follow him must bear a cross.—(To be continued.)

Postal Mission Work.

By Miss FLORENCE HILL,

Hon. Sec. Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers' Union.

All the Postal Missions have a collection of theological works, which they lend through the post to those who apply for a volume. This is one of the most useful branches of the work, for books such as these are expensive and difficult to obtain, and even the free libraries are not well supplied with modern theology. The number of books lent by fourteen of the Missions during 1906 was 1,278. This may seem a small number, but it gives no adequate idea of the number who read the books, for again and again we hear that the books are handed round, read, and discussed by whole circles of friends, including often ministers, lay preachers, and theological students, and in some cases they are lent to fellow-workers in mines and workshops. Only those who read the interesting and thoughtful comments made on the books as they are returned to the library can realise what an important influence both on thought and character they exercise. Many cases have come before us of a complete revolution in life and thought having come about by reading Channing. What I should be inclined to call REAL conversion, as it went to the very roots of character, as well as awakened a truer and happier faith in God's loving ing providence. Dr. Martineau's sermons always arouse the deepest admiration; the saintliness of his spirit and beauty of style seem to strike all readers, both cultured and uncultured, in an extraordinary way. Rev. Stopford A. Brooke also appeals to many. Martineau's "Seat of Authority in Religion," Stopford Brooke's "Unity of God and Man," and Harnack's "What is Christianity" seldom remain long on our shelves.

We venture to give a few quotations from letters received from readers, omitting all names or personal references.

One constant reader, employed on the railway in a remote part of Wales, writes: To-day I have sent you Jackson's "Life of Martineau," which you so kindly lent me. I have enjoyed it immensely. He was a profound thinker, and undoubtedly has left his mark upon our thinking men of this age. It is a thousand pities that the lives and works of such men are not read more than they are. If they were, the narrowness we often find amongst ministers and laymen would soon be dispersed.

An elderly lady writes: I am returning Armstrong's "Faith and Doubt in the Century's Poets," which I have enjoyed very much. If I was a person of means, oh! how I would scatter these beautiful Unitarian works! Every book I read I feel I would like to purchase. I hope to obtain some later, and, when I pass away, they shall go to my daughter in Africa.

Another very thoughtful reader, brought up in an orthodox circle, and at first rather frightened of Unitarianism, wrote, after the study of many of our theological works, as follows: I am returning Allen's "Christian History" and Armstrong's "The Trinity and Incarnation." I have enjoyed both very much, and should like another volume of Allen. Much of the contents of both books were quite new to me, and I am beginning to see more clearly than I have ever done before that the principle of evolution is as true in Christian History as I have long known it to be in so-called secular history; to my mind there is no such thing as secular history—there may be, and are, secular historians. I seem to be standing on the borders of a new land, a land where I can breathe more freely. At one thing I am greatly surprised—I had been told that God and goodness would become less real to me, that I should be casting out the moral ballast, and be left drifting on a dark, stormy sea, with no pilot. This, however, I find not to be true (at least, not at preesnt). God is not less but more real. I see Him not only as He speaks through Jesus in Galilee, but also as He spake (with another voice, it is true) in the invasion of the Roman Empire by the Goths and other barbarians. But I will say no more; these truths, which are new to me, are doubtless familiar enough to you, and I have only said so much to show you that your efforts to help me have not been wholly thrown away. Any book which deals with the rise and development of Christian dogma will always be welcome.

We could multiply such quotations to any extent.

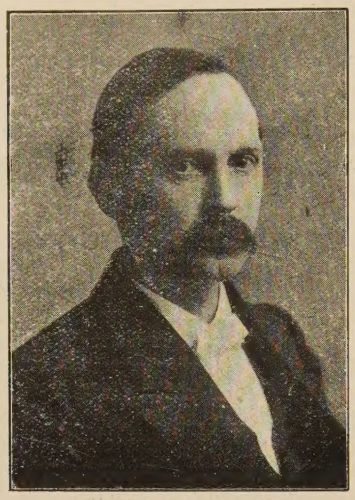
If any readers of "The Unity" wish to know the list of Postal Missions, of our catalogue of books, they should write to Miss Hill, 14, Perrin's Court, Hampstead, London, N.W.

Believe nothing on any outward authority, but compel all to submit to the test of reason, conscience, and love. Believe only because you feel, approve, and know; believe like happy children, not like submissive slaves. So shall you be truly free; and within yourself, you will have the witness that what you hold by is from God.

—J. Page Hopps.

All of good the past has had
Remains to make our own times glad,
Our common daily life divine,
And every land a Palestine.

—Whittier.



Rev. T. P. SPEDDING.

The Unitarian Van Mission.

At the annual meeting of the Missionary Conference of Unitarian Ministers, held at the Memorial Hall, Manchester, in July, 1905, the Rev. T. P. Spedding read a very able paper proposing that a new missionary movement be started for the propagation of Unitarian views by means of open-air meetings, with the aid of a travelling van; and that in this van Unitarian missioners should go from place to place in localities where our Gospel is comparatively unknown, and boldly declare the good news. This idea—a new thing in Unitarianism borrowed from the methods of some well-known social and political reform movements—was received somewhat doubtfully when the paper was read. A minister appointed to open the discussion on it confessed that he had no experience to encourage him to give the idea any earnest support, and feared that he would be incapable of taking any part in such a work if the experiment were tried. When he sat down another member of the Conference—the Rev. H. Bodell Smith—afraid that Mr. Spedding's proposal might be defeated by timidity and "cold-water" treatment, ventured upon the platform and, backed up by a wide experience of open-air preaching and lecturing, spoke with sufficient warmth in favour of the proposal as to inspire the Conference to put faith in it, and he moved the resolution that the Conference Committee be instructed to carry out the Van Mission suggestions put forward by Mr. Spedding, and, after an animated discussion, the resolution was carried with enthusiastic unanimity.

The Conference Committee soon got to work, Mr. Spedding and the proposer of the resolution being included among its elected members. One of the first things the Committee did was to appoint Mr. Spedding as secretary for this special work, a step abundantly justified by the rich results which have accrued. A London lady—Mrs. Bayle-Bernard—almost at once gave sufficient money for the purchase and equipment of a van, and a gentleman who had read an article in "Unity" describing the needs of the Van Mission, having a suitable van to dispose of, wrote to the Editor, and the Editor put him and Mr. Spedding into communication with each other, with the result that, after the van had been visited and inspected by members of the Committee, certain structural improvements agreed upon and satisfactory terms of purchase arranged, this van was secured. A subscription list was opened, and an expenses and maintenance fund raised. Mr. Bertram Talbot—a contributor to "Unity," better known to its readers as "Centonarius"—expressed a willingness to assist the Van Mission as a lay helper, and he was ultimately prevailed upon to accept the post of van steward and mission agent, resigning a more lucrative professional calling in order to give himself to this work. With Mr. Talbot to be always in charge of the van, and a full list of ministers who consented to spend a week with the Van as special missioner, each in turn, Mr. Spedding and the Committee (after numerous business meetings) had the first campaign organised, and the Van, with its missioners, started on its way. From May to October it was taken from place to place through parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, with results that surpassed all anticipations. It was seen that the Van Mission was a great success, and that it had come to stay. Every district in the kingdom has since been clamouring for a Unitarian Van in its locality, and through the munificence of a few wealthy gentlemen it has been possible to promise four vans for the coming season.

Evidently this movement is developing to much larger dimensions than was at first anticipated. It had become necessary that men must be appointed to give their whole time to it. Accordingly Mr. Bertram Talbot was asked to give himself permanently to this work, and then it was realised that the possibility of losing Mr. Spedding by his probable removal from the Manchester district would be a calamity to the Mission. So it was privately suggested to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association that it would be a good thing if they could assist the Missionary Conference by appointing Mr. Spedding as its agent to take full charge of this work. The Association Committee agreed to do so, and made an offer to the Missionary Conference to take over the work of the Van Mission and the financial responsibility of carrying it on, under Mr. Spedding as its missionary agent. The Missionary Conference agreed, and Mr. Spedding was appointed. He resigned the pastorate of his church at Rochdale, after completing 20 years' successful ministry there. On Saturday, Feb. 23rd, his congregation held a farewell and presentation meeting, when Mr. and Mrs. Spedding were presented with a handsome silver rose bowl and a purse of gold, on behalf of the Church and Sunday School, in the presence of a large assemblage, and accompanied with eulogies from a variety of speakers. Other gifts followed from the Men's Class and from the Social Union; and on March 8th, at a special social gathering held at the Reform Club, the Rochdale Lib-

erals presented him with several volumes of the works of Mr. John Morley, including the "Life of Gladstone," along with a solid silver tea service, on which it is inscribed that Mr. Spedding is "a valiant fighter in freedom's cause." Mr. Spedding's farewell sermons of Feb. 24th were well reported in the local press. "The Rochdale Monthly" had a character sketch of him in its January issue, with his portrait on its front page, which is here reproduced for "The Unity, by kind permission, for the pleasure of our readers.

Under Mr. Spedding as the managing missionary agent, with Mr. Bertram Talbot as his principal assistant, the Van Mission is sure to continue in its already prosperous career with increasing success. The splendid outcome of the movement so far is largely due to his untiring zeal, his excellent business faculty, and power of organisation. The persistent labours of the Missionary Conference Committee in earnestly co-operating with him have helped considerably to make that success possible—as Mr. Spedding himself would be the first to acknowledge. But he is the right man at the post of management, and now that he has behind him the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, the developments of this propagandist movement are in the care of those able to cope with its increasing requirements, and with them its future is safe..

NOTE.—Mr. Spedding has sent us a short letter, drawing attention to the fact that over 600 members of Unitarian churches and schools signed the van visitors' book during the tour. Many more friends were present at the meetings who were unable to visit the van. The desire now is to obtain as complete a list as possible of all known Unitarians who were present at one or other of the meetings. When this has been done, it is intended to issue a communication with a view to the establishment of missionary societies in the churches and schools, and it is hoped that all those who sympathise with the Van Mission would be able to join in a society which would undertake simple and, it is believed, useful work for the benefit of its own church and school, in the first instance, and incidentally helpful to the Van Mission, the District Missionary Society, and any other agency which might have claims. Mr. Spedding would be glad to have direct communication from any of those who were present at the meetings.

Non-Unitarian visitors at the van meetings, who have recently been readers of "The Unity," are thanked for the wonderfully encouraging letters which many of them have sent. There are still, however, a number who have not yet replied to the circular issued last month, and it is hoped that if this paragraph meets their eye they will forward the reply-postcards which were then issued. It might be useful to these readers also to know that the President of the Postal Mission is ready to lend books and pamphlets dealing with the principles and beliefs of Unitarians, on application by letter to her at the Memorial Hall, Albert Square, Manchester.

The Fatherhood of God.

(To the Editor of "The Unity.")

Sir,—I was much interested in the article in your magazine for March, bearing the above title, which fell into my hands a few days ago. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the educational value of such articles, independently of their bearing upon Unitarianism properly so-called. They stimulate thought, and there is hope of mental, moral, and spiritual progress only for him who thinks—but thinking is terribly hard work, and I fear a good deal of it is "put out" to be done by proxy, somewhat like our washing; and the result in each case is often unsatisfactory.

But to return to the article in question. The writer of it seems to fix the date of the inception of the idea as about the time of the later Jewish prophets, which is probably about 400 years B.C. But surely that is not early enough. Nor is the conception of purely Jewish origin, but more probably Chaldean; for it had already crystalised into literary shape in that country even before the birth of Abraham, the reputed father of the Jewish nation. Much light has been diffused over these matters in recent years by the labours of that noble band of workers who have spent their lives in the endeavour to revitalise the far-off past, and exhibit the essential spiritual unity of man in all ages and in all countries. I quote the following from Sayce, who refers to it as a fragment of Chaldean literature of an earlier date than Abraham:

"Father, long-suffering, and full of forgiveness,
Whose hand upholds the life of all mankind,
First-born, omnipotent, whose heart is immensity,
and there is none who may fathom it!
In heaven who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme!
On earth who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme!
As for thee, thy will is made known in heaven, and
the angels bow their faces!
As for thee, thy will is made known on earth, and
the spirits below kiss the ground!"

Notwithstanding the baldness of the translation, the exalted conception of the Fatherhood of God supersaturates the thought, and imparts a spiritual glow to the language, which, for sublimity, is scarcely surpassed by later prophets.

Apologising for troubling you on this matter, I am, yours truly,

F. J. GEORGE.

56, Premier Street, Brooks' Bar, Manchester.

[Our correspondent's interesting letter contributes one out of many testimonies that might be quoted, did limitations of space permit, to show that the conception of God's universal Fatherhood existed earlier than amongst the Jews; but he is slightly in error in saying that in the article he refers to, the writer fixes its first inception with the later Jewish prophets. It was not intended to be so understood, and the article does not so put it.—Ed.]

Literature.

"A Free Catholic Church," by J. M. Lloyd Thomas, 117 pages, 1/6 net. Williams and Norgate, 14, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.

The whole contention of this book is just what every believer in a free and rational religion is sure to agree with. Mr. Thomas advocates an inclusive church that must have its doors open. He clearly shows that real religion is catholic or universal; that the inclusiveness of religious fellowship is the fulfilling of Christianity; that an undogmatic church, absolutely free as to doctrine and opinion, is necessary to make such a catholicity and inclusion possible; that though dogma—compulsory doctrine — is dangerous to truth, to spiritual development and fellowship, definite doctrine is important and necessary, but it must be adjustable to every revelation of truth; that such a free, catholic church must recognise the necessity of symbolism and make use of music, poetry, and art to express its love of beauty, its passion for truth and righteousness; and that "the higher churchmanship" means individual loyalty to the religious fellowship of the church as embodying the spiritual conception of human society, the communion and brotherhood of man, with love for the church as natural and passionate as the love of the patriot for his country. In six chapters of clear, crisp, and yet fervid language, Mr. Thomas puts these ideas before his readers, expressing the ideal for which every undogmatic church exists—including all that are or profess to be Unitarian.

In his suggestive Introduction the author states that his pages indicate "a way out of sectarian controversy," but is it quite correct to make the phrase "particular denominationalisms" synonymous with "dogmatic churches" (p. 2), or to speak of degrading Christianity "into a denomination" (p. 13), as if "denomination" means the same as "sect"? Can a community of even Free Catholic Churches be anything other than a "denomination"? and is not the word "Christianity" itself a name—a "denomination"? It is possible to have a denomination of unsectarians which is not a sect in the usual sense of being exclusive. This confusion of terms which are different, and which mean different things, helps to perpetuate confusion of thought. Mr. Thomas no doubt much prefers the name "Free Catholic" for an undogmatic church against the word "Unitarian," and yet "Unitarian" does not require the qualification "Free" as in the case of the term "Catholic," as it is itself a synonym for freedom; it is less open to objection than "Catholic," which has for ages been associated with mental and spiritual bondage. Indeed, a "Unitarian Church" is just that "Free Catholic Church" which this book pleads for and describes.

There is much to praise and little to criticise in this excellent essay. Just now and then a word selected to express the writer's meaning might be simple English instead of ugly Latin, as in the case of an "otiose conclusion" (p. 39), where—idle conclusion—would be plainer to the average English reader. But the language of these pages is so clear as to render a trifle of this kind the more conspicuous. There is so little in this book that can be taken exception to, and its tone and spirit are so excellent, that we can heartily recommend it to our readers. It is receiving commendation from eminent people of various churches, and having an extensive sale, such as must be gratifying to both the writer and his publisher. We congratulate Mr. Thomas on producing so forcible and eloquent a plea on behalf of such a grand ideal, and we could wish nothing better in this connection than that all people of our churches would procure his book and read what he has to say.

"The Faith of a Free Church, and other Essays," 328 pages, 2/- net; "The Perfect Life," Discourses by William Ellery Channing, D.D., People's Edition, 6d. net; "Materialism and Atheism Examined," by J. Freeman Clarke, D. D., 6d. net; "The Ultimate Authority in Religion" (20 pp.), 1d., by John Page Hopps; and "How to Make the Best Use of Sunday" (16 pp.), by Brooke Herford, D.D., 1d. All published by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, Essex Hall, London. (Notices next issue)

How I became a Unitarian.

By the Rev. J. MORGAN WHITEMAN.

I was brought up in the straitest sect of orthodoxy—as a Scotch Presbyterian. The "Shorter Catechism" supplied my theological pabulum, and I early absorbed its contents. I still possess a plize received for correctly reciting the answers to the first forty questions, with the Scripture proofs, when I had barely entered upon my eleventh year.

In my early youth, my father rejected Calvinism for Arminianism, joining the Evangelical Union ("Morisonians"), which is now included in the Scottish Congregational Union. I readily followed him in the adoption of the somewhat milder type of theology, but did not think the difference between the old and the new of sufficient importance to necessitate the severance of my connection with the Church and Sunday School to which I had become very warmly attached. Leaving home in pursuit of my employment, I found myself in Scotland's capital, with abundant choice in the matter of religious fellowship, and ample opportunities for self-improvement. My hap was to light on a Primitive Methodist Chapel, where I found not only my father's "New Theology" (the comparison is with Calvinism, of course!), but what was infinitely more to the purpose, true religious fellowship, and work.

I had already been a Sunday School teacher for several years, and had even begun to "hold forth" at evangelistic services of the undenominational type, although only 18 years of age. The Primitives, of whom I had had no previous knowledge, afforded me abundant scope for such service, of which I readily availed myself, under the kindly and en-

lightened guidance of the minister, the Rev. T. Parr, M.A., who also encouraged and directed me in my studies.

In due course I was recommended for the ministry, and passed through the usual probationary stages, which provide sufficiently severe tests of a physical and moral kind, as well as intellectual. The whole of my Methodist ministry, including four years' probation, was spent in East Anglia, amongst conditions almost as widely different from those to which I had been accustomed in Edinburgh as if the transfer had been to East Africa. But "remote from towns" as I was, I managed to add to my prescribed studies a good deal that lay beyond their range, and that led me to call in question many of the accepted dogmas of Methodist Orthodoxy. The unwieldly tomes, whose very size and weight seemed to harmonise with the "heavy" character of their contents, began to sit like a nightmare on mind and conscience, with their shallow "refutations" of "larger hope" theories and more enlightened views of atonement. Before I was well out of my probation, therefore, I had begun to "hae my doots" on many points which were supposed to have been settled once for all. The crisis came two or three years later. I had already begun to be recognised as a protagonist of the New Theology in the meetings of our Ministers' Association, and was invited to read a paper on Mr. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock," which had just appeared, and created some commotion. I thought the Grand Old Man's "Rock" extremely shaky, and said so; and when I look at that old paper now, after the lapse of 18 years, I wonder how my "grave and reverend seniors" stood it as well as they did, and do not wonder at the solemn head-shaking which followed its reading, and the grave predictions as to the probable future of the writer, unless—which was impossible! Yet I gladly testify that at such gatherings the greatest freedom of discussion was allowed, and even encouraged, and nothing like heresy-hunting or persecution ever followed the man of rationalistic tendencies.

New Theology and Higher Criticism had, however, played such havoc with my orthodoxy that I hardly knew where I stood, when Dr. Martineau's "Seat of Authority" came into my hands—lent by a good friend, to whose wide reading and well-stocked library I was greatly indebted. Up to that time my Unitarian reading had been almost entirely confined to Channing's works; but the new point of view offered by Martineau was exactly what I had been seeking for. About the same time I read "Lux Mundi" and "Robert Elsmere," and the comparison thus forced upon me between the timid and halting attitude of the High Church-men on the one hand, and the courageous and consistent stand of the Unitarian veteran on the other, helped out by the reading of Mrs. Humphry Ward's story, compelled me to make my choice—or rather drove me to the conclusion that, "so help me God, I can no other" than follow the clear light of Martineau's philosophy. I read all the criticisms on it that I could lay my hands on, including Dr. Dale's, with the result that I was always driven back with renewed zest to the great book, as I still regard it, which probably saved my faith from total shipwreck.

About the same time I attended several Unitarian lectures given by the late Mr. Broadrick, Mr. Bowie, and others, in the Co-operative Hall, Chelmsford—a circumstance which naturally set folks talking, for I was in the fourth year of my ministry there as a Primitive Methodist, and frequently preached in the Congregational chapels in town, to the pulpit of one of which I had recently declined an invitation. Still I had the old, deeply-rooted prejudice against the Unitarian name, which I felt I could never accept; and when eventually the strain became too great to be longer endured, I gave up my Methodist ministry without the least idea that I should enter that of the Unitarians. I confess that Dr. Martineau's attitude towards the name was a stumbling-block to me, as it has been to many others; but when I found that the orthodox pulpits which still remained open to me after my resignation were at once closed as soon as I had accepted an invitation to preach for the late Rev. R. Spears at Highgate, I began to see things in a new light; and the hearty welcome accorded me by the Unitarians wherever I met them eventually overcame my prejudice, and led to my accepting an invitation to the pastorate of the Peckham Unitarian Church. Thus the transition was made, sixteen years ago—a transition from bondage to liberty.

Wendell Phillips once wrote that the protest of Quakers and Unitarians "has changed the creeds and pulpits of all Christendom, Roman Catholics not excepted. Channing preaches in every pulpit, and George Fox's broad hat looks out from every creed."

In 1872 the Rev. Dr. Fulton, of America, an orthodox divine, said: "The weakness of Unitarianism appears to-day in the fact that it is ashamed of its name, and seeks to be known as liberal Christianity." Some now have surely inherited this defect.

A minister asked a humble unlearned woman why she did not believe Christ to be God. She replied that she read and believed the New Testament, and there she found that Christ never claimed to be God, that he prayed to God, obeyed God, came from God, and went to God.

Sir Isaac Newton, the great mathematician and philosopher, and a Unitarian, once said: "All the worship, whether of prayer, praise, or thanksgiving, which was due to the Father before the coming of Christ, is still due. Christ came not to diminish the worship of his Father. We need not pray to Christ to intercede for us."

Definitions: Religion and Theology.

(Continued.)

What is Religion? 'Tis man seeking God,
Inquiring, climbing towards His bright abode,
Striving to know, to do, to bear His will,
Growing for ever nearer, nearer still.

Religion is as universal as sunshine, or love, or God. Its fountains are in every land; its prophets dwell under all skies.—(Rev. J. T. Sunderland, D.D.)

There is no religion—or if there is I do not know it—which does not say "Do good, avoid evil."—(Max Muller.)

Your religion is good if it is vital and active, if it nourishes in you faith, hope, love, and a sentiment of the infinite value of existence; if it is allied with what is best in you against what is worst, and holds for ever before you the necessity of becoming a better man; if it makes you understand that pain is a deliverer; if it increases your respect for the conscience of others; if it renders forgiveness more easy, fortune less arrogant, duty more dear, the beyond less visionary. If it does these things it is good, little matter its name; however rudimentary it may be, when it fills this office it comes from the true source, it binds you to man and to God.

But does it, perchance, serve to make you think yourself better than others, quibble over texts, wear sour looks, domineer over other men's consciences, or give your own over to bondage; stifle your scruples, follow religious forms for fashion or gain, do good in the hope of escaping future punishment? Oh, then, if you proclaim yourself the follower of Buddha, Moses, Mahomet, or even Christ, your religion is worthless—it separates you from God and man.—(Charles Wagner.)

It is a help to man here, not the means of obtaining happiness hereafter.

No man has more religion than he exhibits in his daily life. Have more in your heart than you carry in your head.

THEOLOGY.

Gr. Theos, God—logos, a treatise (Century Dict.) Denotes, according to the strict meaning of the word, "the science of God."—(Dr. Jas. Drummond.)

The science concerned with ascertaining, classifying, and systematising all attainable truth concerning God and his relation to the universe; the science of religion.—(Century Dictionary.)

Religion is the feeling of God himself acting on the soul; theology is man's thought of God in a symbolised form.—(J. H. Thom.)

The New Theology is a name popularly given to a modern phase of Protestant evangelical theology, especially as found in the New England Congregational Churches. As an intellectual movement it has much in common with the Broad Church movement in the Church of England. In its philosophy the New Theology partakes of Greek; the old theology of Latin Christian thought.—(Century Dict.)

CENTONARIUS.

"A Mother!"

"The Coming Day" quotes the following from "Fellowship":—

In the train were a lady, a nurse girl, and a little boy. The boy pinched the nurse's face, tore her bonnet, kicked and screamed, as only a spoilt child can. Whenever the nurse remonstrated, the injudicious mother said "Let him have it, Mary. Let him alone." Finally the mother composed herself for a nap; and about the time the boy had slapped the nurse for the fiftieth time, a wasp came sailing in and flew on the window, and the boy tried to catch it.

"Harry mustn't touch it! It will bite Harry!"

Harry screamed, and began to kick the nurse. The mother, without opening her eyes, cried out sharply,

"Why will you tease that child so, Mary? Let him have what he wants at once!"

"But, ma'am, it's a——"

"Let him have it, I say."

Thus encouraged, Harry clutched at the wasp and caught it. The yell that followed brought tears of joy to the passengers. The mother woke again.

"Mary," she cried, "let him have it!"

Mary turned in her seat and said quietly:

"He's got it, ma'am!"

The other passengers smiled, and almost sang the doxology.

Sensible Resolves.

A Brooklyn Universalist minister has suggested the following sensible resolves for himself and his people to follow: "I will not allow the minister to preach to my vacant seat. I will attend chapel to worship God, and not to criticise my neighbour. I will speak a cordial welcome and a cheerful word to 'the stranger in our midst.' I will deem it a privilege to 'talk up' (and not 'run down') my own chapel to my associates and friends. I will pay my indebtedness to the chapel as I would other just claims. I will remember, or try to, the Golden Rule when I think of the minister, the choir, the trustees, the Sunday School superintendents and teachers, the workers of the other institutions, and all others in places of responsibility in the chapel and school. I will work to the best of my ability to make the chapel and school I belong to grandly successful in the great campaign." The chapel or church that carries out this programme well deserves to be "grandly successful."

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it has sown,
And garner up its fruit of tears.

—John Burroughs.

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Notes and News.

Will our readers note that the bound volumes of "Unity" for 1905 and 1906, illustrated, and with a detailed index of contents, can still be obtained, 1/- and postage (3d.) each, or 2/- and postage (4d.) the two vols.? Five copies and upwards sent at 9d. each post free. Vol. I. is out of print. Readers should secure Vols. II. and III. while they can get them.

Some "Unity" readers have availed themselves of the "Reformers' Bookshelf" offer, and have expressed delighted satisfaction at getting such good value at so little cost (see advt.)

The Rev. R. J. Campbell has withdrawn his consent to be the Essex Hall Lecturer at the B. and F. Unitarian Association meetings in Whit-week, the reason given being that his lecture might interfere with the success of a book on the "New Theology" which he has now published. His apparently conflicting utterances concerning the nature of Christ give the impression that Mr. Campbell does not quite know where he is. His book is said by some to be epoch-making. Though it is much the same as Unitarianism, Mr. Campbell denies that it is, and calls it "Spiritual Socialism"; well, that is just what Unitarianism is. But since the refusal of the London Board of Congregational Ministers to admit the Revs. Dr. Warschauer and H. C. Walface into membership Mr. C. has resigned his position of chairman of that body.

Messrs. John Gledhill and Samuel Whitworth have had presentations made to them by the Mossley Unitarians, in appreciation of their connection with the Sunday School as teachers for over fifty years.

Sir Oliver Lodge's persistent efforts as a scientist to rationalise theology evidently meets with much appreciation. The demand for his latest book, "The Substance of Faith Allied with Science," was so great before publication that almost the whole of the first edition was thus spoken for.

Mr. John Harrison, of London, has investigated into the financial position of Unitarian ministers, and was astonished to find that many received stipends which some business men would not think of offering to a commonplace clerk. Every eye in a town was constantly on these men, he said, and yet some of them were not half so well provided for as other self-respecting professional men whose character and conduct were not particularly eyed by anybody.

A locality in Cardiganshire, where Unitarianism is strong, is called the "Black Spot" by the Welsh orthodox.

Allen Raine, the Welsh novelist, was the great-granddaughter of a notable Unitarian minister Davis, of Castle Howell.

The Rev. Gertrude Von Petzold is doing splendid work at the Free Christian Church, Leicester, in organising special services for men, and meetings for women, which are proving most successful and drawing large attendances.

The Plymouth Unitarian Church seems to have been quite revived under the ministry of the Rev. J. H. Belcher, largely due to work amongst young men and sympathy with collectivist aspirations.

Mrs. Ginever, wife of the Dover Unitarian minister, has recently lectured to an audience of 1,000 persons.

Mr. Bertram Talbot has been lecturing on the Unitarian Van Mission at Leigh, Mottram, and other places.

Arrangements are now being rapidly developed for the Van Mission season for 1907. There will be four vans at work, including one in Scotland, one in Cheshire and the Potteries and parts of Lancashire and possibly Yorkshire, another in the Midlands, and the fourth south of London.

Over 50 English Unitarian ministers are likely to visit America next September to attend the meetings of the International Council of Unitarians. A grant towards expenses has already been made from the special Boston fund raised for the purpose—to forty ministers.

Mr. Hodgson Pratt, the great peace advocate, and a Unitarian, has passed away.

Circles for the study of social problems have been instituted in connection with the Liverpool Hope Street Church, and the Church at Bootle.

The Chesham Bazaar at Bury was so successful that the amount raised, clear of expenses, exceeds the £2,000 aimed at. The workers have our warmest congratulations.

Concerning our notice of Mrs. Ormiston Chant in last issue, some readers inform us that Mrs. Chant is declining engagements to preach for Unitarian Churches, and more exclusively devoting herself as regards preaching to what appears to be the assistance of evangelical orthodoxy. But Mrs. Chant does not contradict our notice of her, a copy of which was sent to her London address. It simply records what has been undisputed fact.

Burnley Unitarianism has sustained a serious loss in the sudden death of Mr. Alderman James Bibby; and Accrington in the death of Mr. John Taylor, ex-town councillor; and our Portsmouth friends in the death of Mr. Henry Blessley.

A portrait of the late Rev. J. R. Beard, D.D., has been presented to the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester, by his son, Mr. James Beard, J.P., and it was unveiled at a largely attended meeting held at the College, Summerville, on Thursday, March 7th. Dr. Beard was the originator and principal founder of the College, and its first Principal.

Our Barnard Castle Church is flourishing under the Rev. A. G. Peaston.

Our Stalybridge friends have held a successful sale of work in aid of a new Guild room. The Good Friday meetings of the M.D.S.S. Association are being held at Stalybridge this year, at the invitation of the Unitarian Church.

The Rev. J. Page Hopps has been preaching on a sort of missionary tour among the Unitarian churches of South Wales.

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(*A Paper read at the Annual Missionary Conference of Unitarian Ministers, Memorial Hall, Manchester, July 5th, 1906; published verbatim in "The Christian Life," July 14th, 1906, and in "Unity," September, 1906, and now re-printed in pamphlet form by request.*)

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